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Message Text

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12
ORIGIN EA-14

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DRAFTED BY EA/P:WMAGRUDER:PP
APPROVED BY EA/P:WMAGRUDER
---------- 000636
R 052212Z MAR 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS
AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
USDEL JEC PARIS
USSAGE NAKHON PHANOM
CINCPAC
COGARD
XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

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COGARD FOR POLAD

EO. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, XC, US
SUBJECT: MARCH 5 EA PRESS SUMMARY

INDOCHINA

1. EMBASSY SAIGON SPOKESMAN CONFIRMS THAT US OFFICERS WILL FLY TO HANOI TOMORROW TO COLLECT REMAINS OF 12 SERVICEMEN WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY, AND TAKE THEM TO U TAPAO FOR IDENTIFICATION AND EVENTUAL REPATRIATION. SPOKESMAN HOPEFUL THAT THIS MAY BE BREAKTHROUGH IN LONG-STALLED NEGOTIATIONS AND FIRST STEP IN ACCOUNTING FOR MIAS (REUTER SAIGON; UPI, NYDN).

2. ARVN SPOKESMAN SAYS THAT UP TO YESTERDAY SVN FREED
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3175 VC POWS AND RECEIVED 463 IN EXCHANGE. CURRENT

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RELEASES DUE TO FINISH TOMORROW WITH EXCHANGE OF FINAL
500 (REUTER SAIGON). UPI PHILADELPHIA REPORTS KOSH
LEFT MONDAY TO RETURN SAIGON FOLLOWING HOSPITALIZATION
FOR HEPATITIS AFTER RELEASE BY PRC (CHITRIB).

3. ARVN SAYS 47 NVA/VC KIA AND 128 WEAPONS CAPTURED
FOLLOWING ATTACKS THROUGHOUT DELTA INVOLVING NVA
TROOPS BELIEVED RECENTLY INFILTRATED FROM CAMBODIAN
SANCTUARIES (REUTER SAIGON).

4. KHMER REBELS CUT ROUTE 4 ABOUT 17 MILES WEST OF PP,
TIGHTEN RING AROUND KAMPOT (UPI, NYDN). FANK COMMAND
SAYS REINFORCEMENTS RUSHED TO KAMPOT MEET HEAVY RESISTANCE
IN EFFORTS TO RECAPTURE LOST POSITIONS. SITUATION
TERMED CRITICAL, WITH ABLE-BODIED MEN OF TOWN BEING
ARMED WHILE WOMEN, CHILDREN AND ELDERLY ALLOWED TO LEAVE
BY SEA (REUTER PP). NAPALM-LADEN T-28 CRASHES INTO
SUBURB NEAR POCHENTONG AFTER TAKEOFF; PILOT AND CHILD
DIE AND TWO HOUSES BURN (AP PP).

5. ISAACS (SUN) FROM PP WRITES THAT US "FINALLY"
BEGINNING EXPAND REFUGEE AID. UP TO NOW, ONLY
"TINY MINORITY" OF OVER TWO MILLION UPROOTED KHMER
RECEIVED HELP FROM "CORRUPT,INEFFECTUAL" GKR. US
PROGRAM WILL INCREASE FROM "TOKEN" TO FOUR MILLION
DOLS PLUS "UP TO 10 MILLION DOLS" IN COUNTERPART
RIELS FOR FOOD, HOUSING, AND TO RESETTLE REFUGEES TO
MAKE THEM SELF-SUPPORTING. ISAACS QUOTES OFFICIAL
THAT SITUATION GETTING "VERY BAD," REFUGEES HAVE NO
WORK, NO FOOD AND POOR HEALTH. NOTES US FAILURE TO
MOVE EARLIER CRITICIZED BY SENATOR KENNEDY LAST YEAR.
EMBASSY HAS SEVERAL EXPLANATIONS: REFUGEES COPING
BY MOVING IN WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES, GKR NOT
EFFICIENT OR HONEST ENOUGH TO ADMINISTER PROGRAM
AND 200-MAN LIMIT ON EMBASSY PREVENTED US MANAGEMENT.
ANOTHER FACTOR WAS LOW-PROFILE POLICY OF FORMER AMB.
SWANK, NOW CHANGED BY ADDITIONAL FUNDS AND NEW
COMMITMENT TO HELP REFUGEES. EMERGENCY FEEDING
AND SHELTER TURNED OVER TO CARE, CRS AND INT. RED CROSS.
GKR REFUGEE FOUNDATION, "UNDER VIRTUAL CONTROL
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OF THE US EMBASSY," WILL RESETTLE REFUGEES ON FARM
LAND, THOUGH PLANS "STILL VERY VAGUE." ISAACS WARNS
THAT SYSTEM NEEDS CAREFUL SAFEGUARDS TO AVOID ABUSE
THROUGH "RAMPANT PROFITEERING THAT CHARACTERIZES
THE CAMBODIAN ELITE."

6. PL OFFICIAL SAYS MEETING OF SOUPHANOUVONG WITH
RLG AT LUANG PRABANG WILL NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL

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"PROPER SECURITY" ASSURED. ADDS THAT RLG TROOPS "BESIEGING" PL COMPOUND IN ROYAL CAPITAL DESPITE WITHDRAWAL ORDERED BY SOUVANNA. RLG STATES DOING BESV TO SATISFY PL WITHDRAWAL DEMANDS BUT LACKS FUNDS TO COMPLY RAPIDLY (REUTER VIENTIANE).

INDONESIA

7. DEPUTY SEC. RUSH DEFENDS US-UK PLANS FOR DIEGO

GARCIA DECLARING INDIAN OCEAN REGION SHOULD NOT BE LEFT FOR SOVIET NAVY TO MONOPOLIZE. RUSH COMMENTED AFTER MEETINGS WITH SUHARTO AND OTHER INDO. OFFICIALS WHO HAVE EXPRESSED REGRET AT BRITISH AGREEMENT TO DIEGO GARCIA PROJECT (AP, NYDN).

BURMA

8. PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY APPROVES 19-MEMBER CABINET HEADED BY PM SEIN WIN (AP, UPI, NYDN, NYT, PHINQ).

KOREA

9. ROKG APPEALS TO WORLD COMMUNITY TO USE ITS INFLUENCE TO PREVENT RECURRENCE OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN TWO KOREAS (PHINQ).

10. FOUR U.S. SOLDIERS INJURED IN FIGHT BETWEEN US AND NK SECURITY GUARDS AT PANMUNJOM, U.N. COMMAND ANNOUNCES IN SEOUL (WP).

JAPAN

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11. GOJ OFFICIALS PLAN TO START SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH US AND EEC VERY SHORTLY LEADIN8 TO CONCLUSION OR EXTENSION OF BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS ON TEXTILES, JAPANESE OFFICIAL SAYS JAPAN FEELS THAT UNDER GATT MULTILATERAL PROVISIONS IT HAS RIGHT TO CHANGE OR ABROGATE CURRENT BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS. HE INSISTS THAT JAPAN WOULD RATHER REVISE AGREEMENT WITH US, WHICH LIMITS SHIPMENTS TO AMERICAN MARKET OF JAPANESE PRODUCED COTTON, WOOLEN AND ARTIFICIAL TEXTILES, RATHER THAN ABROGATE ARRANGEMENT. WITH EEC HOWEVER, JAPAN WOULD LIKE TO BROADEN COTTON TEXTILE PACT TO INCLUDE OTHER TYPES OF TEXTILES. JAPANESE TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS FEAR ABROGATION BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE U.S., EEC SAFEGUARD RESTRICTIONS AGAINST JAPANESE TEXTILE IMPORTS. CURRENT AGREEMENTS EXPIRE

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THIS YEAR (CULLISON, JOC).

12. REPRESENTATIVES OF JAPAN HARBOR TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION HAVE AGREED TO TAKE UP DEMAND BY LONGSHOREMAN'S UNION FOR GUARANTEED MINIMUM WAGE OF 456 DOL/M0 NEGOTIATIONS EXPECTED TO BE DIFFICULT. BEHIND WAGE AND OTHER DEMANDS LIES THREAT OF SERIES OF SLOWDOWNS AND STRIKES AT JAPANESE PORTS IN MARCH OR APRIL. CURRENT TARGET FOR SOME "UNDERSTANDING" IS MARCH5 (CULLISON JOC).

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

INDOCHINA

13. LAT'S MCARTHUR (MAR. 3) IN SAIGON WRITES LENGTHILY ON HANOI'S DOMESTIC AILMENTS, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTES TO SELF-WILLED ISOLATION AND WAR. SAYS AFTER GREAT DEAL OF SOUL-SEARCHING, NVN'S AGING POLITBURO MEMBERS HAVE REPORTEDLY DECIDED TO SEND YOUNG PEOPLE ABROAD TO FILL GAP IN MIDDLE-MANAGEMENT MANPOWER. DECISION, AFTER YEARS OF CONCENTRATING ALMOST SOLELY ON WAR, REPRESENTS SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN EMPHASIS. SIGNS FROM NVN HAVE CONVINCED SOME HANOI WATCHERS THAT GIAP'S MILITARY STAR IS ON WANE, AND THAT NVN'S ECON NEEDS HAVE DESTROYED PREVIOUS PARTY DOGMA THAT ROAD TO WAR AND ROAD TO SOCIALISM COULD BE TRAVELED AT
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EQUAL SPEED. MAN TO WATCH NOW IS LE THANH NGHI, WHO HAS MADE RECONSTRUCTION MAJOR PARTY POLICY. BY HANOI STANDARDS, NGHI IS WELL-TRAVELED; IN PAST 14 YEARS HE HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN TO MOSCOW AND PEKING AND HAS VISITED ALL IRON CURTAIN COUNTRIES AS AID NEGOTIATOR. SOME LONG CONSIDERED HIM DARK HORSE TO SOMEDAY REPLACE PHAM VAN DONG. MCARTHUR INDICATES NVN IS BESET WITH AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS, AMONG OTHERS. CITES ANLAYSTS THAT OVERALL PRODUCTION - ONE YEAR AFTER SIGNING OF C-F AGREEMENTS - REMAINS BELOW FIGURE FOR 1964, WHICH WAS LAST YEAR THAT NORTH ENJOYED RELATIVE ISOLATION FROM SOUTHERN BATTLEFIELD. AGRIC., WHICH PROVIDES HALF OF GNP AND ABSORBS THREE-QUARTERS OF WORK FORCE, CONTINUES TO LAG. NVN WAS ONCE ABLE TO GROW 90 PERCENT OF ITS FOOD, TIGHTEN BELT FOR REST IF NECESSARY; NOW ESTIMATED IT CAN MEET ONLY 75 PERCENT OF FOOD NEEDS, AND CONSEQUENTLY IS DEPENDENT ON PRC FOOD SHIPMENT TO WARD OFF INEVITABLE SOCIAL UNREST. GROWING DEPENDENCE ON CHINA IS POSSIBLY MAJOR FACTOR IN SHIFT AWAY FROM MILITARY EMPHASIS FOR THE MOMENT. QUOTES WESTERNER THAT RECONSTRUCTION IS THE THING IN NVN AND THAT IT WOULD TAKE MAJOR

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EFFORT FOR GOVT. TO CRANK PEOPLE UP AGAIN FOR FULL-
SCALE WAR.

14. REUTER'S SHARROCK IN SAIGON INTERPRETS RECENT
SPEECHES BY NVN LEADERS AS INDICATING HANOI HAS CHANGED
ITS EMPHASIS FROM POLICY THAT COULD BE SUMMED UP
AS "ALL FOR THE SOUTH" TO "BALANCED PRIORITY" AIMED
AT REPAIRING WAR DAMAGE AND IMPROVING ECONOMY. NOTES
KEY NVN POLITBURO MEMBERS AT RECENT SERIES OF CONGRESSES
AND MEETINGS DEVOTED THOUSANDS OF WORDS TO TWO-YEAR

PLAN FOR ECONOMIC RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT, BUT
ONLY FEW DOZEN WORDS ABOUT NOT FORGETTING "TO FULFILL
THE DUTY TO THE HEROIC SOUTH." CAUTIONS THAT CHANGE
OF PRIORITIES HAS NOT ALTERED NVN'S ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE
OF TOPPLING SAIGON REGIME AND REUNIFICATION OF COUNTRY
UNDER COMMUNIST GOVT. CITES HANOI WATCHERS THAT
NVN FIRST BUILT UP ITS MILITARY OPTION IN SOUTH AFTER
C-F AND THAT ARMY THERE CAN BE EXPECTED MAINTAIN
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MILITARY PRESSURE ON GVN AND AIM AT IMPEDING ECON
PROGRESS UNDER THIEU. ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATS, NEWLY-
FIXED PRIORITIES COULD BE RAPIDLY SWITCHED AGAIN
IF THERE IS MAJOR POLITICAL CRISIS OR ECON COLLAPSE
IN SAIGON.

THAILAND

15. LAT'S FOISIE (MAR. 1) IN UTAPAO REPORTS AIR
BASE REMAINS FULLY READY FOR RESUMPTION OF AIR WAR;
STILL HAS 7,000 MEN, 50 STRATOFORTRESSES, 100,000
BOMBS STORED IN REVETMENTS, AND AFTER SLIGHT CUTBACK
44 TANKERS REMAIN. NO TALKS OF CUTBACKS AS AT OTHER
5 US BASES IN UPCOUNTRY THAILAND; NO TALK OF CUTBACK
AT SATTAHIP, EITHER. CITES AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES
THAT SENIOR US OFFICERS HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT UTAPAO-
SATTAHIP COMPLEX WILL REMAIN INDEFINITELY IN US HANDS,
WH
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